

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 20, 2009

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:


We request that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) purchase cultivated blueberries for use in nutrition programs such as the School Lunch Program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program.

Last fall, the blueberry industry requested USDA to purchase 20 million pounds of blueberries. Thus far, only 1.7 millions have been requested. As of the end of March, there are 130 million pounds of blueberries in inventory.

A timely purchase is a win-win for blueberry growers and for the nutrition programs that are so important to millions of Americans. The blueberry industry has an unmanageable surplus of blueberries, and growers need to sell the surplus as soon as possible to prevent below-cost pricing levels. A federal purchase of blueberries will provide school children and families in need with a healthy and nutritious fruit

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you to ensure a healthy crop year for American blueberry growers and ensuring that needy families are provided with nutritious diets. Please keep our offices updated on your decision and any purchase plans.

Sincerely,



Frank A. LoBiondo
Member of Congress



John Adler
Member of Congress